Ray Plotted New Break, NBC Says

WASHINGTON (UPI) — James Earl Ray, serving a 99-year sentence for the murder of Martin Luther King Jr., plotted another attempt this spring to break out of the Brushy Mountain prison in Tennessee, NBC News reported today.

Ray was recaptured last year after escaping from the prison for three days.

Plans for the second escape bid were intercepted by the House Assassinations Committee when Oliver Patterson, a congressional informant, stole letters from Ray to his brother, Jerry Ray, NBC said.

Patterson found the letters, along with a map of the prison, in Jerry Ray's toilet kit while he was sharing a Washington hotel room with him, NBC said.

NBC said Patterson pocketed the letters and map, photocopied what he had stolen, and mailed the copies to the Assassinations Committee.

The committee turned the evidence over to Tennessee authorities.

James Earl Ray will be the major witness when the committee begins its public hearings next week on King's murder.

(Warden Stonney Lane confirmed that he received information within the past few months that Ray might be plotting another escape.

("I don't remember exactly when it was I got the information that Ray might be planning another escape," Lane said. "It was somewhere in the last three or four months. The TBI was handling it. But we didn't do anything special here. We just went about our usual precautions with Ray.")

Knox News-Sentinel

Agent Says Assassinations Inquiry Testimony Supplied

ST. LOUIS (UPI) — A man identifying himself as an undercover agent for the House Select Committee on Assassinations says one of the panel's investigators supplied him with answers to give the committee.

Oliver Patterson said yesterday he has worked for the FBI since 1971 and for the last several months worked for the congressional committee in its investigation of the assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Patterson said he met with committee attorneys to give a deposition of his undercover work with Jerry Ray, brother of James Earl Ray, who pleaded guilty to killing King.

"During that testimony I was asked questions by a lawyer for the committee named Michael Eberhardt and on several occasions I was handed written answers to the questions by Conrad Baetz, a staff investigator for the HSCA," Patterson said at a news conference.

"I read the Baetz-supplied answers into the record and the stenographer apparently took it down as my own. I do not believe that the members of Congress on the committee know that their staff is functioning in this fashion."

Patterson, who said he is a salesman from St. Louis, said he did not remember most of the questions. However, he said Baetz told him to "say something nice about J.B." when the questions concerned J.B. Stoner, a white supremacist.

Patterson said the FBI recruited him to gather information from Jerry Ray.

"I continued to carry out that assignment for approximately three years," he said.

He said his activities included illegal wiretaps of conversations with Ray, stealing letters and other documents from Ray and trying to get a hair sample from Ray.

Ray Needs Psychiatric Testing, Kershaw Says

NASHVILLE (UPI) — Jack Kershaw, former attorney for James Earl Ray, said yesterday the convicted killer of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. "definitely does need psychiatric aid."

Kershaw said the "last thing" he did for Ray as an attorney was to file a petition asking that Ray "have the benefit of a preliminary psychiatric evaluation test.

" . . . He took it as an offense and was insulted," said Kershaw. "But the man definitely does need psychiatric aid and I can't understand why no court has ever seen to it that he had this help."

He said he could not comment in detail because of his client-attorney relationship with Ray, but added, "I'm not saying he's crazy at all.

"I'm just saying there are legal grounds for giving him a psychiatric evaluation test. My word, the man has been in prison for 10 years, about eight of that in solitary. That alone would be grounds for giving him a test to see if his personality, his emotions have been affected."

" . . . By such a psychiatric test, there might be some chance of penetrating the big question of what are or what were the big motives of James Earl Ray," said Kershaw.

He said he still believes "there is too much evidence that Ray did not act alone for me to ignore the possibility" of a conspiracy in the slaying.